

Council Member Moye: Dr. O'Bryan, can you describe your position and your role and kind of your qualifications to be our medical expert here?

Dr. O'Bryan: Sure. Dr. Edward O'Bryan. Emergency Medicine physician at MUSC. Also the Executive Director of MUSC Health Solutions, Chief Medical Officer for MUSC Business Health and the Director of Business for Telemedicine Services for Business Health. I have been in charge of implementing the telehealth platforms and algorithms for Coronavirus screenings, testings, referrals, and treatments for the state of South Carolina.

Mayor Carroll: Recommendations?

Council Member Moye: Okay, so overarching recommendations. Right now, we have a proposed ordinance that would restrict short-term rentals, which means overnight accommodations that are 29 days or less for restricting beginning 10am Thursday, March 26 through April 30, 2020. That would allow visitors currently checked in to stay until the end of their existing reservation. That is the current proposed ordinance, and I guess maybe we can start off with maybe your general reaction and advice and recommendations on that proposed ordinance.

Dr. O'Bryan: Sure. I think that sounds very reasonable. I mean, I will say that we are seeing an uptick in the number of screenings and tests that are coming back positive, and we noticed early on that many of those coming back positive were travelers, and many of those travelers were from New York. The way the pandemic appears to be playing out to a large degree is that the United States will be affected by Coronavirus everywhere, however, there are going to be hotspots just like in Italy. Northern Italy is a hotspot, but the rest of Italy was affected but not as badly, so the concern would be that people coming down and renting, I do not know where renters come from, but I assume a lot come from some places that are spots, that is the northeast. So the idea would be to keep people out of our rental markets or out of area if at all possible until this has blown over to a large degree. There is a lot of good evidences that the virus can live on surfaces and in households for some people have said up to 14 days, but it is probably closer to a week. So I would be concerned at turnover of houses without proper disinfection could spread the virus even further.

Council Member Bell: John, may we ask his definition of proper disinfection? Is it possible to properly disinfect to a level that would ensure the safety? Normal commercial cleaning.

Dr. O'Bryan: That is a great question. I would say without adequate policing of cleaning crews house to house, I would not say it is not really possible to do that in the short-term because there are only certain agents that are approved. As you probably know, bleach has to be a certain concentration. You have to hit every area that could be touched. Have the air filters, it is a difficult task even for the hospital, so I would say that is probably not possible.

Council Member Bell: Thank you.

Mayor Carroll: Question, Dr. O'Bryan. This is Jimmy Carroll. We are talking about not only our reservations of guests coming here, but we are also discussing other measures, whether it be essential services, construction, yard maintenance. Should we take precautions along those lines? Or do we just self-distance with these types of contractors?

Dr. O'Bryan: That is another good question. I would think, I will say this. I think having locals provide local services that are already in existence, that those services, sounds like a lot of those outdoor services with limited amounts of people, one or two workers at a time, usually less three working in any environment at any given time I would say is relatively safe as long those people know to isolate if they have any conditions and to access a telemedicine platform for screening and testing. I would say that is a lot safer than having people from out of town via travel or (INAUDIBLE) come into the island.

Mayor Carroll: Councilman Ward.

Council Member Ward: Yes, sir. Dr. O'Bryan, this is Jimmy Ward. My question would be the ordinance as it is being presented is through April 30th. How would you feel if it was just set up for 14 or 15 days and then take a look at it later if we need to extend it? That is what a lot of people are asking me.

Dr. O'Bryan: Gotcha. I think it is going to be tough. I think in 14 days we will have a better handle on what the outbreak is going to be like in our community. However, a community like New York, the northeast where it has hit really hard, or in L.A., there is not going to be much progress in 14 days. Between us, it is going to be closer to a month. You can do the 14 day. It might make sense to do a 14-day with an automatic 14-day renewal, and you have to (INAUDIBLE) as opposed to having to put it in place again. That might make sense. But it is going to be longer than two weeks.

Mayor Carroll: Council Member Smith, do you have a question?

Council Member Smith: You guys covered a lot of my questions, and I guess I am also concerned about the hotels, especially hotels and condos where you have greater concentration of people, and if you could speak to that about the proximity that comes with hotels as well as shared swimming pools with large condo complexes or resort area.

Dr. O'Bryan: Sure. As to the pools, I would follow the Governor's recommendations of the pools to limit the crowds to 10 or less (INAUDIBLE) or preferably 30 or less in any of those pools. It sounds like those pools may be larger than that, so it might not be possible. But as to the hotels, you are right. Any closer environments is worse, so more people in a more confined environment is obviously significantly worse for spread of the virus. A lot of hotels have sectional air systems, in that several rooms might be supplied by the same air system, which could make it challenging as far as virus spreading. A lot of good data that is the way it spread in a couple of apartment complexes in China and Hong Kong. So that is a bit of a different issue.

Mayor Carroll: Councilman Streetman.

Council Member Smith: Thank you.

Council Member Streetman: Dr. O'Bryan, this is Rusty Streetman. I just wanted to ask a question and get your thoughts regarding the demographics we have here on the island. As I understand it, our average age on the island is 56 years old, and we also have over 30% of our residents are over 65 years old. Could you give us a little information about that particular demographic and how they may be even more impacted? Someone that has the coronavirus that they are carrying, and how that could impact an island this small if it was introduced here.

Dr. O'Bryan: Sure. Sure. I think as you might have read the virus appears to have a significantly higher mortality. It has a higher morbidity and higher mortality. In other words, people of an advanced age, and I would call, it is affecting 50% of people over 40. Okay, so 40 and above. So the older you are, especially over 55 and over 65, the mortality goes up into the double-digit range, and what is not included in mortality is morbidity which is an even higher percentage of the people end up needing hospital and or ICU care, which would be a big stretch on us here in our Charleston community. We are already preparing for a lot more patients, so it could be pretty severe for a population that is of an advanced age. And that is why forbidding rentals, even short term, is not something, it is hard to walk back once people are here and spreading infection. It is hard to walk backwards. That is why being proactive is so important.

Mayor Carroll: Council Member Smith.

Council Member Smith: Thanks. I meant to ask this before, but I also have a concern about the actual people who would be cleaning the facilities, a rental or a hotel room, and whether they are at risk even if they are outside of a hospital situation, if they do not have proper supervision that they may also have a greater risk of getting the virus and spreading the virus?

Dr. O'Bryan: Yes, that is certainly possible. I would recommend the people cleaning the houses during the pandemic use proper personal protective equipment or PPE. This would include more likely than not an N95 mask while they clean or at least a surgical mask, gloves, and make sure they are using cleaning materials containing at least the proper concentration of bleach, which is pretty common. But your question is accurate. Yes, it could put them at increased risk as well.

Council Member Bell: Doctor, additional question. How concerned are you at the existing hospital infrastructure is being overwhelmed by an influx of people coming into the community? I had one resident describe it as if the lifeboat is only built for 25, you know we are not likely to be able to accommodate 50, and it seems to me that the prudent communities are not just looking out for the welfare of their own residents, but recognizing that we are putting increasingly our emergency personnel at risk when we overwhelm our facilities. How concerned are you about the facilities in this area being overwhelmed?

Dr. O'Bryan: That is certainly one of our primary concerns. All of our senior leadership at MUSC, at Roper and Trident and East Cooper are all staffing up. We are all trying to get as many ventilators online as possible. We are trying to make sure our ICUs are open and available. Make sure people who do not need to be in the hospital are out. It is as serious as I

have ever seen it and it is something in medicine. I mean, we are preparing for a significant influx. Now, we hope that does not happen, of course, but that is what we are preparing for. It is significantly more preparation than for a hurricane for example.

Council Member Bell: Thank you.

Council Member Moye: Dr. O'Bryan, Councilman Jimmy Ward wanted to know if there were any projections that you could share with us that might help us, I think, understand (INAUDIBLE) yeah, any kind of numbers your organization has either calculated or has access to.

Dr. O'Bryan: We do not have projection numbers per se. We can only go by global mortality rates and global infection rates per capita. Based on that, what you are seeing, we do expect a large uptick in Coronavirus infections within the next, I would say, 14 to 21, I would say 14 days. It is going to take another 14 days for those infection cycles to go away. So I cannot give you exact numbers unfortunately because (INAUDIBLE) like that. I wish I could.

Council Member Streetman: Dr. O'Bryan, Rusty Streetman again. As of today, the total of confirmed cases in South Carolina is 342, and there have been 7 deaths related to that. Is that, I mean, low numbers (INAUDIBLE) obviously, but is that a higher rate than what you would expect in terms of the death rate for the virus?

Dr. O'Bryan: It is not because the majority of those people were older. I think several were nursing home patients. (INAUDIBLE) So that death rate does seem, percentage wise, pretty decent. I think if you anticipate you were about 14 days behind the curve, you can say probably 10-24 times the number that we have confirmed positive have the virus in the state at a minimum. If you want to do estimates based on statistical analysis that has been published. Multiply that by 10 or 24, it is probably a more accurate number (INAUDIBLE) who are currently infected. The mortality will track along with age fairly accurately, I would think, but we are kind of on pace. I will say this. South Carolina has done a lot of testing, but the lab results, because all the labs are overwhelmed, are taking a little bit longer to come back than we would like. So I think that number is going to start to increase especially as we get more of our labs online for testing complete. That is another thing. If people were to come in from out of town and have symptoms it puts a stress on our systems here to do their lab tests because their results can be delayed by several days, and they could be traveling. And between those times, we do not know, so that would be a big challenge.

Mayor Carroll: Council Member Smith, I think you have another question.

Council Member Smith: Yes, thank you. One more question was just if we went with like a 30-day, allow 30-day rentals, monthly rentals, would it be best to have a break in between those monthly rentals of say three days or a week to allow if there was the virus on surfaces and that kind of thing, would that help in terms of preventing spread?

Dr. O'Bryan: I am not sure we have enough data to be able to say 100% that or not because those things where you have read where it lives on cardboard for over 24 hours and all that kind of stuff, those tests were done under relatively ideal conditions. There is some data that shows high heat and high humidity make the virus last less long, which would be beneficial to us in South Carolina coming in the next coming months. So I think more data will come out in the next 30 days, 14-30 days, that would give us an answer on that.

Mayor Carroll: Dr. O'Bryan, Jimmy Carroll speaking. We have some special circumstances on the Isle of Palms as for our Public Safety. We have a checkpoint as you enter the Isle of Palms. We have police there checking for IDs. I cannot say that we have protective gear. We are trying to stay at distance, but I want to make sure that we are doing what we can to keep our officers safe. And also our Public Safety building is a joint police and fire, it is under renovation. So we have our personnel in trailers. But we have contractors over there working, general contractors, so I am just worried. Is there any fear of their infecting, cross-infecting equipment, vehicles, any way, anything that we should do specifically to protect our Public Safety personnel in this construction setting? Even though they do not really interact, but they are in and out of the building, and probably walking by vehicles. We do not know if they are infected or not infected. But again, I am worried about, we have a small police department and a small fire department, and one infection could really spread and affect us terribly so. Comments on that?

Dr. O'Bryan: That is a true. That is a good point. I think, you know following the standard sanitary guidelines, your EMS and Fire are going to have (INAUDIBLE) wipes. They should certainly wipe down their surfaces between their shifts, whether that is in their trucks or cars. They can do that. They can use their Clorox wipes, also will suffice. Use PPE when possible. If they are checking people's licenses at those checkpoints, make sure they use gloves and do not touch their faces. Just regular surgical and or cloth face masks are not unreasonable. They do not protect you from hailing virus particles, however, they do protect you from touching your face, which is the way the virus typically gets into your system. So that is a consideration. I would say adequate social distancing between the contractors and your employees as well as a mandatory policy of staying out or reporting symptoms if you get sick. We call this self-monitoring where if any symptoms arise, fever, cough, anything like that, you have to self-monitor. Go to a virtual check-in and get cleared basically before you come back to work.

Mayor Carroll: Thank you, sir. Council Member Smith.

Council Member Smith: I am good.

Mayor Carroll: Any other questions for the doctor? Here and none, Doctor, I cannot thank you enough...